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ABSTRACT

The Problem Panel Project is an instructor-developed, one-semester course in contemporary problems. Based on the inquiry approach, the course is structured for independent research and group work and requires no traditionally-structured daily lesson plans. The course is divided into six procedural points. First, students decide which contemporary problems they want to study and then form a panel with other interested students. Second, the group researches their given topic in the library. Third, students break the topics down into subtopics and assign a specific one to each member of the panel. Fourth, each student reads, analyzes, and summarizes 10 primary sources on the particular subtopic. Fifth, the students present their individual research to the panel for suggestions and possible additional research. Each student prepares a short oral presentation on his individual topic. The panel then organizes the individual oral presentations into a group presentation to be given before the entire class. Sixth, the final presentation is given, including an introduction, various presentations on subtopics, and an overall conclusion based on the results of the research. (Author/DE)

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THE PPP: PROBLEM PANEL PROJECT
CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS
INSTRUCTOR: CRAWFORD

Student's Name: _____
Due Date: _____
Problem Group: _____
Special Area: _____
Student's Role: _____

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SP008 018

Introductory Rationale:

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Besides the traditionally oriented lecture and exams, discussions, debates, and audio-visual materials; I have found that it is necessary to challenge my students, who are usually in above-average, elective social studies courses. This challenge has now been met via my Problem Panel Project (PPP). Due to the level of instruction and the desired independent nature of much of the work to be completed, there is really no justification for the traditionally-structured daily (Monday through Friday) lesson plans. The PPP will be procedurally divided into six points, all of which will be discussed at great length later.

The very nature of investigation into the societal and political problems of an ever-increasing complex technological society demand a methodology which is both relevant and meaningful for the student(s) involved. It is firmly my opinion that the inquiry approach to discovery learning based on the principles of gestalt psychology is of optimum importance in the attainment of the objectives or goals of the PPP.

Russ Crawford
Pekin High

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The inquiry approach views the learner as an active thinker-seeking, probing, processing data from his environment toward a variety of destinations along paths best suited to his own mental characteristics. It rejects passiveness as an ingredient of effective learning and the concept of the mind as a reservoir for the storage of knowledge presented through expository instruction directed toward a predetermined, closed end. The inquiry method seeks to avoid the dangers of rote memorization and verbalization as well as the hazard of fostering dependency in citizens as learners and thinkers. In summation, it can be said that the inquiry approach calls for students to be confronted with contrasting viewpoints and facts from several sources. The process involves important thinking operations such as comparing, observing, interpreting, summarizing and criticizing. The process leads to conclusions and generalizations which have a rational factual basis.

SOME PURPOSES OF INQUIRY:

1. to find a solution to a problem.
2. to answer a question.
3. to resolve a value conflict.
4. to satisfy curiosity.
5. to determine the validity of a generalization.

SOME INQUIRY GUIDELINES:

1. Fruitful classroom discussion will be more than a debate. It is more than an occasion to defend views. A "combat" posture will not result in true inquiry. Students will be encouraged to think of discussion as an opportunity to develop and clarify their views.

2. The erroneous notion that all opinions are equally valid will be discouraged. The class will be engaged in establishing objective standards for judging the rationality and validity of their positions. Students must understand that some opinions are better than others.
3. It will be expected that students will develop a questioning attitude when "facts" are presented in discussion. Facts need interpretation. Sources of information must be considered. And value judgments must be made.
4. Discussion will be regarded as more than just talking. Students will be expected to have real knowledge of important facts of the issue being discussed.

RATIONALE FOR THE PROBLEM SOLVING TECHNIQUE

A great deal of individual and group effort must be exerted to solve the complex problems facing the individual and society in today's modern world. It is my belief that enough of the problem solving process must be learned in school so that it can be applied later in civic and professional life.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING:

A good imagination is essential to creative problem solving and being able to identify with both disadvantaged minority groups and with those in positions of great responsibility. This ability to put yourself in the shoes of another (backed specifically by Gestalt theory) is a vital part of good citizenship and, most importantly, of becoming a truly humane person.

Objectives of the Problem Panel Project:

1. The student should be able to engage in research on his/her own to adequately meet the requirements of the PPP in terms of the topical area of study chosen by the student.
2. The student should be able to develop skills of working and discussing and decision-making in groups since this is basically how realistic society is organized.
3. The student should be able to logically develop the concept of responsibility and apply it to his/her situation relative to the role he/she is playing in the group. (This might very well involve the development of leadership capabilities.)
4. The student should be able to develop or refine (as the case may be) his/her capabilities for public speaking and conveying both factual content and interpretation to the class.
5. The student should be able to adequately use the newspaper and other viable alternatives for primary source research and documentation for the PPP.
6. The student should be able to organize material in a meaningful fashion in order to facilitate analysis and synthesis of that information.
7. The student should be able to evaluate logically and objectively the material he/she is researching and, therefore, to deal with the pros and cons of his/her particular opinions concerning the problem.
8. The student should be able to adequately engage in the problem-solving technique using the primary principles of logical consistency and open-minded objectivity therewithin.
9. The student should be able to defend his/her proposed solutions to the particular problem individually selected to the class during a question and answer session.
10. The student should be able to understand that futility should not arise if instant success is not met upon the advent of his/her particular suggestions as to solutions for the problem. Realization of the merits of developing awareness and probable solutions for contemporary American problems will be stressed.

Procedural Outline:

As stated in the introduction, I have broken my Problem Panel Project down into six procedure points. They are:

- I. Problem Clarification and Interest Articulation
- II. Research: Secondary Source
- III. Small Group Work Series: Secondary Sources
- IV. Research: Primary Source
- V. Small Group Work Series: Primary Source
- VI. Formal Problem Panel Presentations

Following will be an individual explanation for each of the procedural points listed above:

I. Problem Clarification and Interest Articulation:

The first day of classes I will briefly acquaint the students with the topics (four) which will be covered during that particular semester (depending upon whether it is the Problems I or Problems II course). This discussion will basically deal with brief definitions of the problems and a few of the debate points which will be raised in each problem area (ie., some debate points for Crime are capital punishment, gun control legislation, environmental vs. heredity causes, rehabilitation vs. punishment, etc.) At the end of the period, I will ask the students (as an assignment) to read through the newspaper and find as many different articles describing what they consider to be a major problem for American society and bring them to class along with a list of what they consider to be the five most severe problems for America in order of severity.

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The second day of class will be conducted by having representative students share what they consider to be the best selection of their articles with the class (to be used for lead-in for discussion.) During the latter portion of the period we will compute the results of the statistics on American problems and their severity (per class and a general computation later of all classes combined; a large poster could be drawn for extra credit to depict the results. This would be hung in the class for student reference.) By this time, most students should be getting somewhat of a good idea about which problem they would like to devote special attention to during the semester. This, they will indicate also on their problem severity lists(first, second, and third choices). The instructor then has the task of fitting the groups together. The optimum situation for small groups is no more than five and no less than four per group, which means an average of seven groups per class (my average is usually around 32 per section.)

The list of alternatives is completely open to the student; however, obviously, if there were only one student who wished to tackle a certain problem, he would most likely get placed with his second alternative. A student may select a problem which will be under discussion that particular semester, or one which will be discussed the other semester (which he/she may or may not take) or one that there is interest for but which is not included in my course curricula as it currently stands. The only rule is that if a person takes both courses of problems, he/she may not select the same problem area to research.

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The usual alternatives will probably come from the following list:

Problems I topics:

Crime and Juvenile Delinquency
Poverty and Welfare Problems
Foreign Relations and United States Involvement
The Role of Women In American Society

Problems II topics:

Prejudice and Discrimination
Demography and Population Growth Problems
Propaganda, Public Opinion, and the Press (Media)
Alienation and the Meaninglessness of Life

Additional topics not formally covered:

Child Abuse and Family Problems
The Elderly and Old Age Problems
Political Corruption as a Governmental Problem
Ecological Problems and Pollution Control in the Environment
Tobacco, Drug, and Alcohol Abuse
Consumer Problems and the Economy
Education: Ignorance Is Bliss? or "Too Many Chiefs & Not Enough Indians!"

Upon completion of the group arrangements per class, the instructor should stick to one fast hard rule: the only changes possible in groupings is if two students come to the instructor desiring to switch; otherwise, the grouping numericals would be confused. The instructor should indicate which students are in which group to facilitate the desired switches if necessary. It is essential that each and every student feel that he/she is going to do research that is of significant importance in possibly solving or attempting to solve a problem that he/she perceives as severe. A setback of faulty grouping at this point could diminish motivation which would be catastrophic at this point of the project.

II. Research: Secondary Source

The first assignment in the second procedure involves the library. Large high schools have a course in library use or perhaps a willing librarian who will enter your class and discuss research elements of your particular school (or local) library. If this is not possible, be sure that this is taken care of by the instructor. At no time should a library assignment be made wherein the class just "attacks" the library with little procedural or organizational basis from which to work. Not only does the student need library research information; but an assignment form is needed so that the student will know exactly what is to be expected.

The form recommended by this instructor is:

TITLE PAGE-including Title, Author, Publication Date, Student's Name, Course Title, Instructor's Name, Section or Hour, and Due Date.

INTEREST-one to two pages on just Why you chose this particular book; what is there about that problem topic which strikes you as important or severe.

AUTHOR-one page (if one is possible) of the author's background and/or qualifications to determine the possible aims, motives, and possible prejudices of the author. The times in which the author wrote should also be taken into consideration at this point in determining social influencing.

PROBLEM RELEVANCE-two to three pages to identify the major problem(s) and to discuss their relevance or significance to contemporary American society (in terms of the student's opinion).

DATA INFORMATION-one to two pages to discuss the important facts, ideas, and proposals concerning the solutions to the problems discussed. (Primarily, in terms of author's opinion.) Student analysis and discretion needed.

CONCLUSION-three to four pages to discuss how, or perhaps to what degree, the book has changed and/or confirmed any of your opinions, values, or ideals. (This is the most important section wherein the student analyses opinion before/after.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The student should have the book selection cleared with the instructor before leaving the library. (Unless a student is going to select a book from another source-public library or home, the rule should be followed. Have the book cleared as soon as possible otherwise.)

Author information may be found in the book itself, in encyclopedias, in other books (see card catalog), in Who's Who, in Contemporary Author Index, and in the Bibliographical Index. All of these sources should be consulted. If still no material is to be found see the instructor for information.

The report is to be from eight to twelve hand-written pages long (five to seven if double-spaced typed) on one side of the paper only. (Title Page is not a page counted.)

Identify each portion of your report with the appropriate heading from the handout. To save paper, continue with the next heading without skipping to a new page for each heading.

The due date for the report will be given well in advance. On that particular day, no activities will be planned so that the student may proof-read, add finishing touches to, or generally polish the report. Since the period is only an hour, good advice would be to have the final draft at least partially written before class begins. If report is complete or typed before, the period may be used for study purposes. All reports will be turned in on the due date; none before or after will be accepted. Absence is no excuse; if you can't come, send the paper anyway.

A mature, responsible student's action should be characterized by honesty. Contrary actions, such as plagiarism or giving unauthorized help on examinations will result in disciplinary action and lowering of grade...probably to zero. (ICC Handbook)

Plagiarism is defined as:

"...any uncredited use of another's information, ideas, or wording (that is, derived from books, periodicals, classroom or telephone conversations, radio, television, etc.) Under the mistaken notion that he is paraphrasing, a student often reproduces his source almost exactly, changing a word here and there. An honest paraphrase, however, is one in which the student states the ideas of his source in his own language, using original sentence patterns and words."¹

¹Porter G. Perrin and George H. Smith, "The Reference Paper," Handbook of Current English, 3rd ed. (Glenview, Illinois, 1968), p.485.

III. Small Group Work Series: Secondary Sources

After these initial library workdays, the first of the small group meetings takes place in the classroom. The students, after breaking down into the seven groups, elect a chairperson and a secretary-correspondent for each group. The duties of the former is primarily organization and, of the latter: note-taking for later reference. The groups will then discuss their own particular problem area and eventually have every member of the group assigned a specific subtopic area (as in a newspaper beat) to each member of the group. For instance, the Crime group might be broken down into: Juvenile Delinquency, Prison Reform, Organized Crime, etc; or Pollution Group into: Noise, Air, Water, Land, etc.

After the instructor has graded the reports and handed them back with comments, the students are to do an "up-date" on them to bring them up to qualified standards if necessary. When the students who needed up-dates have had their material graded and handed back, the students again enter into their groups and discuss each others report and how they all fit together with the overall general group problem. At this point, all of the students in the group should read completely all of the reports from their fellow group members. This will usually insure that each member will not only know his/her own specific subtopic area well; but will also have a fair idea about the other subtopic areas of the problem on which they are collectively, and yet at the same time individually, engaged in research.

RATIONALES IN :
GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING VERSUS INDIVIDUAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Attention has been focused on how reasoning is done by individuals thinking as individuals. What is the result if individuals combine their thinking and try to solve a problem as a group? You have probably had some experience working on committees. Perhaps you have served as a chairman of a committee. Have you ever become disgusted with the way in which committees work? Have you ever felt that you could have solved a problem all by yourself in less time and to better advantage than did a committee? Did someone on the committee express what seemed to him an excellent idea, only to have someone else disagree quite violently? Members of the committee took one side of the argument or the other and refused to back down in their "reasoning". No doubt some members felt inadequate and were defending themselves rather than trying to think through the problem of the group. Committee work can be very exasperating.

Although group efforts to solve problems can sometimes be exasperating, there is evidence that under some circumstances individuals working as a group can do a better job in solving problems than can the same individuals working as individuals. In one experiment, the subjects were divided into two groups. During the first half of the experiment, groups composed of four individuals attempted to solve some difficult problems while the other individuals worked by themselves on the problems. In the second half of the experiment, the persons who had worked in groups now

worked as individuals and those who had worked as individuals now worked in groups. Of course a different set of problems was used for the second half of the experiment. The percentage of correct solutions for the group efforts was 53 as compared to 7.9 percent for the individual efforts. Furthermore, notes kept on the solutions attempted indicated that individuals working alone tended to make more errors in the earlier steps of the solutions than in the group situations. When an individual made an incorrect suggestion in the group situation, others would point out the fallacy and no further time would be spent on that lead. The individual working alone had no one to check his thinking and prevent the attempted solution from going far in the wrong direction before the error was detected. Obviously, whether a group solution to a problem will be more efficient than an individual solution to the same problem depends upon the abilities and training of the individuals composing the group.

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THE ORGANIZATION AND VARIOUS FUNCTIONS OF RESEARCH COMMITTEES

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- I. Leader
 - A. Selected by the group.
 - B. Coordinates committee work.
 - C. Maintains scholarly discipline.
 - D. Assists with research when possible.
 - E. Organizes committee efforts.
- II. Secretary
 - A. Handles correspondence if necessary.
 - B. Keeps accounts of possible expenses.
 - C. Contacts experts for information, interviews, and meetings.
 - D. Assists with research.
 - E. Selected by group.
- III. Chief Writer or Writers
 - A. Responsible for organizing findings into final written form
 - B. Responsible for expression and style.
 - C. Participates in committee work prior to final writing.
- IV. Research people
 - A. All committee members to do research.
 - B. Discovery of facts essential aspect of work.
- V. Typists
 - A. Each group will make its own decision as to typing of paper
 - B. Paper must be typed.

EVALUATION:

- I. Group leaders will be judged by committee members on basis of
 - A. Organization of job assignments.
 - B. Keeping the group on schedule.
 - C. Directing research efforts.
 - D. Maintaining discipline, leading discussions, and providing constructive democratic leadership.
 - E. Contribution to the knowledge, understanding, and solution to the problem.
 - F. Introduction of findings to class(if this is how group determines to present paper).
- II. Group members will be evaluated on the basis of:
 - A. Cooperation with the leaders and other group members.
 - B. Ability to compromise where necessary.
 - C. Willingness to work.
 - D. Willingness to take part in group decisions and accept the decision when vital to progress.
 - E. Willingness to take responsibility for groups success or failures.
 - F. Willingness to assume additional responsibilities when called upon.
 - G. Contribution to the knowledge, understanding, and solution of the problem.

III. Class.

- A. Each committee will report their findings and conclusions to the class.
- B. Evaluation of each report by the class.

IV. Teacher.

- A. The teacher will expect periodic progress reports from the team leader.
- B. Final evaluation of the research paper itself and individual contributions will be made by the teacher.

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IV. Research: Primary Source

In this fourth procedure of the PPP, newspapers (along with magazines) are again very important. The Resource Unit, which is to the primary sources as the Book Report is to the secondary source(s), is a minimum of ten (10) sources. There may be as many primary sources as desired however (no maximum). These primary sources must be in your special subtopic area and of substantial content for the source analysis. A source analysis is required for each of the ten (or more) sources selected for the Resource Unit. A source analysis is composed of two essential parts: a summary/interpretation and a conclusion/opinion, both of which must be approximately one full page in length. (Therefore the very minimum Resource Unit would be twenty pages.) Each source analysis should begin with four essential items: 1.) the title of the article or clipping, 2.) the date (full: month-day-year) of the magazine or newspaper, 3.) the page and section of the newspaper or page of magazine, and 4.) the name of the newspaper or magazine. Furthermore, there should be a bibliography attached to the end of the Resource Unit which lists the sources used.

Most of this research may be in the form of independent study or the instructor may elect to utilize the campus library and class time for such work. It should be noted that the students may include the primary source in their Resource Unit if at all possible. (Obviously, library material would not be applicable.) The instructor should maintain a file (vertical) on each of the subtopic areas and place such material included in Resource Units in the folders for further student research and accessibility. The due date for the Resource Unit should be made well in advance.

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Rationale: Every social studies student should understand and respect scholarly research. Research opportunities are plentiful in the study of modern problems. Skill in research techniques is useful in many ways. Students learn how to find facts, where to find information, and how to report findings in such a way that they will be useful to others as well as themselves. They may learn to recognize and respect good research work.

1. Topics should be selected on the basis of being (a) timely, (b) of genuine interest to students, (c) availability of resource materials, (d) of continuing importance, influencing the lives of many now or in the future.
2. Topics for research should be limited in scope, carefully defined, as specific as possible, and worded in the form of a problem to which the research should provide an answer.
3. Only put one idea on a note card. If you are working in a group, the name of the researcher should be signed on the back of the note card. Each card should include such information on the source as author, title of book or article, publisher and copyright date, and page numbers. All quotations should be properly noted.
4. In order to check on the progress of the research work, there will be dates for progress reports, and outlines and rough draft to be submitted. The completed paper will be turned in along with a one page outline about one month before the end of the semester. Each paper must be accompanied by an oral presentation of the work to the class. In case of a group paper, the presentation could be made in segments regarding the various aspects of the paper whereby the the group member who had worked on a particular aspect of the paper would be responsible for the oral presentation of that particular segment.
5. All papers are to have footnotes and a bibliography. The particular style is up to you but it must be checked by the teacher.
6. I mentioned above that the research paper should display the characteristics of scholarly research. The criteria for this is as follows:
 - a. In your judgement, is the research organized? Does it follow a clear logical outline?
 - b. Are the sources adequately footnoted?
 - c. Has the author used a variety of up-to-date sources?
 - d. Is there evidence the author has made a serious effort to be thorough? Has he made a real try at getting at all of the available facts?
 - e. In your judgement, is there evidence the author was fairminded and suspended judgement until after the facts were known?
 - f. Are ideas expressed clearly? Is the meaning clear at all times?

- g. Remember neatness, spelling, grammar, and corrections.
 - h. In your judgement, are the conclusions of this paper justified? Are the conclusions well supported by the facts presented?
 - i. Have alternative conclusions been given adequate consideration? Are the reasons for rejecting certain alternatives clear and justified?
7. The problem solving approach should be used in doing this paper. The introduction is to include a definition of the problem, and the conclusion should present steps to be taken toward the solution of the problem.

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Problem Solving As Applied To A Group Research Paper

I. Define the Problem

- A. Define and briefly explain words and terms.
- B. Be exact.

II. Discover the Facts

- A. Find out if a real problem exists--prove with facts.
- B. Present general and historical background information related to the problem.
- C. Uncover current facts that relate directly to the problem.
- D. Adequate information essential.
- E. Present essential related information.

III. Digest the Facts

- A. Interpret facts.
- B. Eliminate unnecessary or irrelevant information.
- C. Dwell and reflect on the facts.
- D. Analyze and sift your information.
- E. Summarize when you can and organize.
- F. Use expert opinion in understanding facts.

IV. Decide on a Course of Action

- A. List steps and procedures that can be taken.
- B. Choose among alternatives.
- C. Meet, discuss, analyze, criticize, and decide.
- D. When possible be specific.
- E. Decide on steps that are practical and possible within the community.
- F. Decide on a course of action that will help solve the problem.

V. Do

- A. Recommend what can be done.
- B. Inform these in positions of responsibility as to what might be done.
- C. Take action as an individual and a member of a group.

Remember:

1. Outline and drafts should be used.
2. Information should be as up to date as possible.
3. Include footnotes.
4. Include a bibliography.
5. Acknowledge those who have helped.
6. Use Turabian as a guide.

**RESEARCH PAPER INFORMATION
FOR RESOURCE UNIT
(HOW TO WRITE FOOTNOTES AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EXAMPLES.)**

DEFINITION: A research paper is an extended formal composition giving information selected from reading in a number of sources.

STEPS INVOLVED:

1. **Selecting and limiting the subject:** Select a subject in which research will be interesting to you; be sure your library provides a variety of sources. Limit the scope of your paper so that you may cover it adequately; in fact, you should become a minor authority on your topic.
2. **Preparing a working bibliography:** Make a list of all the available books, magazine articles, etc., that may be useful to you. To save time later, write exact titles, authors, classification numbers, etc.
3. **Preparing a preliminary outline:** This need be nothing more than a list of the various broad divisions you think you will want to write about. Later you will probably change some of these, drop a few, and add subtopics.
4. **Reading and taking notes:** These two processes are inseparable--Never read sources for a research paper without taking notes. Do not trust your memory. The additional time required for following this procedure will pay rich dividends when you write your final outline and your paper. Write your notes on cards (4 X 6?) or uniform slips of paper (1/3 sheets?). You may use your own method, or use notebook paper sheets, but be consistent in how you do it.

Slug--from outline?	Page in Source	Source Number
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Harmful effects	98	III
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Dr. Louis Berg, New York psychiatrist, blamed soapers for relapse of many patients. He said, "Truly the authors have screened the emotional sewers for their material."

(Notice that the part taken verbatim from the source is enclosed in quotation marks, THIS IS ESSENTIAL. One of the most common and most serious faults of research papers is failure to acknowledge by quotation marks and footnotes all "borrowed" wording. You will want to number the sources you actually use, as you will not need to write out the source title on every card.)

5. **Assembling your notes and writing the final outline:** Remember that a typical outline is to the writer what a blueprint is to a builder: it is a plan to follow, not a summary of your material. Perhaps the first step should be to write all of your Roman numeral topics, then the capital letter subtopics, etc., rather than to start at the top and write all items as you go.

6. Writing the theme, including footnotes and a final bibliography: If you have the time and ambition, you should first write a rough draft. Some students like to write this draft rather rapidly, striving for a free flow of ideas, letting details of diction, grammar, punctuation, etc., wait. In writing the final draft, you will then be free to concentrate on styling, neatness, and correctness. Follow the manuscript form prescribed by the English Department, unless your teacher requires some modification. Typed papers are double spaced.

FOOTNOTES:

- (1) The purpose of footnotes is to give the source of (a) quotation (b) statistics (c) statements requiring support; for example, no footnote is needed for the accepted fact that Paul Revere carried news of the British move toward Lexington, but the statement that Revere was still in Boston when the famous lantern signal was given, being contrary to the usual belief, does call for a footnote.

(2) FORM

- 1 Albert, R. Crows, Radio Production Directing, p. 470 (Book)
- 2 James Thurber, "Soapland," New Yorker, 24:30, May 29, 1948. (Magazine article. The "24" is the volume number; the "30" is the page number.)
- 3 "Question of Soap," Time, 41:66, June 7, 1943. (Anonymous magazine article.)
- 4 "Soapers Blamed for Marital Trouble," New York Times, August 10, 1947, p. 6. (Anonymous newspaper article)
- 5 Thurber, op. cit., p. 31 (Source previously "footnoted")
- 6 Ibid., p. 32. (Same source referred to in footnote immediately preceding)
7. Ibid. (Even page number same as footnote immediately preceding)

(3) EXAMPLES

....Innumerable critics say, "At its best, the soap is tedious bilge and at its worst, is revolting morbidity."¹² It rationalizes frustration and provides an unhealthy escape from reality.

Educators, social scientists, and psychiatrists deplore the soap opera's influence.¹³ Dr. Louis Berg, a New York psychiatrist, blames the relapse of many of his patients on frequent listening to soap operas. He has found the "soapers" he listened to full of jealousy, pain, rage, frustration, and insincerity. "Truly the authors have screened the emotional sewers for their material."¹⁴

NBC delegated a committee to investigate the truth of Dr. Berg's accusations. The committee (it is not surprising to learn) found that there was a tendency toward "ethical solutions" and that their effect toward helpfulness.¹⁵

12 "Soap Opera," Reader's Digest, 48:97, June, 1946

13 Lloyd Morris, Not So Long Ago, p. 472.

14 "Soap Opera", op. cit., p. 98.

15 Ibid., p. 100

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In order to give your reader complete information as to your sources, you must attach to your paper a bibliography, a list of the sources you actually used. The following information is given for each item:

Book or Pamphlet	Magazine
Author (last name first)	Author (last name first) (if given)
Title (underlined)	Title of article (in quotation marks)
City of publication	Name of magazine (underlined)
Publisher	Volume and page numbers
Year of publication	Date
Encyclopedia	Newspaper
Title of entry (quotation marks)	Author (if given)
Title of encyclopedia (underlined)	Title of article (in quotation marks)
Edition year	Name of newspaper (underlined)
Volume number	Date
Page number (s)	Page number

Enteries are listed alphabetically. Notice reverse identation.

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V. Small Group Work Series: Primary Source

The procedure undertaken by the students in this step is much like that of the procedure of step III, except that there is much more versatility here as will be pointed out later. By this time the Resource Units should be written. The class breaks up into their problem areas and each member gives a short description of his/her subtopical area to the other members of the group; each member becomes familiar, at least generally, with the other subtopical areas of his/her particular problem-this time in terms of primary sources. Sometimes, if possible, clippings and articles may be distributed among the group members during a member's discussion. It should be noted that during all of the small group meetings, discussion on the part of other members in that group should be noted by the secretary. This will be especially important for the leader to review for a later assignment. After some of the groups have finished discussing the Resource Units amongst themselves, they may elect to go to the library for additional research or to go to the art room for work on projects which will help them to describe their problem to the class at the presentation point. These art, photographic, and newspaper projects that a group may, in addition to the required work load, elect to do may be added into the group grade for credit or entered in as extra credit on either an individual or a collective basis.

The final task in this small group series of meetings is for each individual to write(prefer/ably type) a Formal Panel Presentation Report. This report should be developed in the following manner:

The student should gather together his/her book report (and "up-date" if required), Resource Unit, and any other clippings, articles, or art & photo projects done in the students special subtopical area. Then, each student should prepare a short talk oral presentation (5-7 minutes) which he/she will give later to the class as a whole. There should be some type of notes (on paper or on cards) from which reference can be made during the oral presentation. The presentation should not be read by the student to the class; this tends to be boring to the class and "machine-like" for the reader.

When this oral presentation is prepared, the student should take the major points to be made (which will, of course, already be in highly organized form) and type these out in a condensed (3-5 pages) formal paper. This is the Formal Panel Presentation Report and should be a direct format for the oral report which will be given in class.

Once this FPPR is complete (which will usually be done independently by the student outside of class), the groups are again ready to meet. Now it is time for the groups to really "pull the strings all together." The secretary gets out the discussion notes and each group prepares it's oral presentation to the class. Each individual (secretary and chairman included) must follow this procedure for his/her presentation:

1. Identify yourself and your special subtopical area of the problem.
2. Discuss how your special subtopical area is related to or how it specifically is integrated into the general problem of your group, and why your special area is important.
3. Briefly discuss the causes of your special area. (You may want to express sources' views and agree or disagree and tell WHY!)
4. Briefly discuss some of the important negative (or perhaps positive too) effects of your special area problem on American society.
5. Briefly discuss what you consider to be the viable alternatives for solving (either totally or partially) your special area of the general problem and also what good this would do the problem generally (if any).
6. Finally, perhaps in some conclusive form, state why it is important for the students to do something to help eliminate or start to eliminate the problem AND, perhaps most importantly, what specifically a student could do to meet this goal.

Since the students have already prepared their FPPR, they already know exactly how they are going to meet the needs of the preceding criterion. Now it is time for the group to help their chairperson write an Introduction and a Conclusion for the class presentation.

Introduction:

This amounts to introducing the general area of problem study and the various individuals of the group and the particular subtopical area of study for each member (including the chairman him/herself). Also included must be some interest-attracting force to take hold of and maintain the class attention. This should be in the form telling the class exactly why the problem under study is vital for their knowledge. (This could be in the form of famous quotes, statistics of future catastrophe, or of theatrical procedure: shock therapy approach.) The one rule is: the more imagination and creativity (of course, combined with realism), the better!

Conclusion:

After everyone in the group, including the chairperson, has delivered his/her oral presentation, the chairperson will offer a group conclusion. This is just basically wherein the chairperson offers the class the same type of procedure as does one of the group members except that the causes, effects, and possible solutions are related to the overall general major problem and not one isolated portion of, or factor in, it. Also, this should not be just the chairperson's views. In other words, there might very well be a Majority Report and a Minority Report presented to the class wherein some member(s) who may not be in the view of the majority of the group on let's say the most economically feasible solution for the problem, might file his view with the chairperson via the secretary's notes (or verbally) and have his opinion and its justification (as all opinions should be) entered into the record for class consumption.

After the groups have completed the writing of the Introductions and Conclusions, and finished any of the possible art-photo (or literature, etc.) projects; they are ready for the panel presentation.

VI. Formal Problem Panel Presentation:

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Usually, it would be a good idea to hold the panel presentations until the last two weeks of the semester, when all of the other work for the semester is completed, so that they (students) have time to dedicate themselves completely to this accomplishment for the course in Problems. An entire day should be set aside for each group (per class). At the beginning of each class, the group could come up to the front of the class and bring as many desks as needed for themselves and their displays. They may want to distribute material they have prepared from projects or place them on the walls. The teacher may use this time to set up taping devices if desired. It is usually important to place a notice on the door if taping is going to be going on so that there will be no interruptions.

Before each panel begins, the instructor should remind the remainder of the class to take brief notes on the presentation and to write down some questions to ask the group either individually or collectively when the panel is completed with the formal presentation.

The panel then proceeds with the Introduction, the various presentations made by the group members on the subtopical areas, the Conclusion, and the Question and Answer period where the chairperson of the group acts as moderator and without his/her recognition no one is permitted to take the floor-including the instructor! If there is time permitting when the questions have been exhausted, the floor may be opened up to a general discussion of the class on the particular problem area under study that day. At this point, students may ask questions to one another; which

was not permitted in the Question and Answer period. (Q & A discussion must always involve a panel member.) During the panel presentation, the instructor should go out into the class and take a seat with the audience (remainder of class). There he/she should have three items: a watch, a pen, and an evaluation card on which to jot down comments and questions. This will be discussed later in the Evaluation section.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE PANEL PRESENTATIONS:

The instructor should make a list and distribute it to the students describing when each particular group is to make its presentation well ahead of the time called for it. Also, all written material from the group and the group members should be turned in on the day of that particular group's oral presentation. Absences are no excuse; again if the student can not come to class, the PPP should be sent regardless. No late work should be accepted-short of emergencies involving death! (Pets are not included in this clause). The written work to be handed in is the Problem Panel Project(PPP) and it involves three parts (required). They are:

1. the Book Report and an "up-date" if required.
2. the Resource Unit and an accompanied bibliography.
3. the Formal Panel Presentation Report(FPPR)

Clippings, articles, and art-photo-literature, etc., projects should be turned in at this time also.

No other written material is to be turned in to the instructor. All notes, cards, and materials used in preparation of the panel project are the student's property or may be destroyed or sold if possible!!

Evaluation of the PPP:

Evaluation is probably one of the most essential items in any organized unit of study. It must be directly related to the objectives (which have been earlier presented) and must be readily available to the student for his/her scrutiny. It is only fair that as young adults, the students know the method by which they will be evaluated. The behaviors which the students are expected to display for the proper functioning of this unit are obviously not the behaviors expected in the traditionally-oriented classroom. It is my belief that if the unit is going to be inquiry-discovery oriented, then the evaluation likewise must be lending to the inquiry rather than the traditional approach to grading. The importance of grades in the school system and in society cannot be overlooked. Students have pressures from many sources urging them toward better grades. It is the philosophy of this unit that students be encouraged to think and to question, and to draw conclusions based upon sound logical reasoning and evidence. It is not the philosophy of this unit that the student be driven by the seemingly all-important grade. Grades will be given, this is a cold, hard fact that neither the students nor the instructor can escape. However, in consideration of marks, I firmly believe that all students are capable of a measure of achievement.

It is with this in mind that I have drawn up the following methodological system of evaluation:

(refer to page 16 for diagrams; paper text continues on page 17)

Evaluation Card:

Front: Individual Member's Evaluation and Comments

<u>GENERAL PROBLEM TITLE:</u>	
Leader: Name-Area-	Comments on the individuals presentations and their individual grades and any specific questions the instructor has, goes opposite the individual's name on the card front.
Secretary: Name-Area-	
Members: Name-Area-	
Name-Area-	
Name-Area-	
<hr/> Area for noting good questioning on the part of individual class members for evaluative credit.	

Back: Group Evaluations and Comments

<u>GENERAL PROBLEM TITLE:</u>	
Organization:	Comments on these categories are made and the individual categories are evaluated, taking cumulative results from all group members. Then, all grades for the individual areas are averaged and the total group grade is determined.
Introduction of the Problem/ Problem Definition:	
Reasons/Causes:	
Solutions:	
Opinions/Conclusions:	
Question & Answer Discussion:	
TOTAL GROUP GRADE:	

From this card, each student gets two major grades and a minor participation grade. Each student will receive his/her own determined grade and each student will also receive the grade that his/her entire group received. The minor grade is for class question

The methodology for this type of system is multi-evaluative. It is my belief that the greater the input in terms of grade evaluation, the more evidence there is for the instructor to determine a grade which will be fair and reasonable. Therefore, this unit incorporates eight (8) different evaluations upon which the instructor may draw for judgement. They are:

1. The Book Report Evaluation.
2. The Resource Unit Evaluation.
3. The Formal Panel Presentation Report (FPPR) Evaluation.
4. The instructor observation evaluation of the small group work.
5. The student self-evaluation of small group work (chairperson evaluates each member of the group; each member of the group evaluates the chairperson).
6. The individual student evaluation of panel presentation. (See pg. 16)
7. The total group grade evaluation for the panel presentation. (" ")
8. Questioning evaluation of students during panel presentations.

Evaluative Comments:

The Book Report, Resource Unit, and the FPPR (which comprises the written PPP) will be evaluated on the basis of meeting the requirements of those particular procedures as laid out in this project manual. Besides the traditional answers, credit will be given for logical consistency, rational thinking, organizational problem-solving technique, and neatness—all of which are important ingredients in researching.

The small group work will be evaluated by the instructor by casual meetings and occasional questioning and observation. Since, it could be possible for the instructor to perhaps misjudge the production of a group (it is not impossible to have fun while being productive), there is a safeguard check: the self-evaluation. This procedure is secretive wherein the chairperson evaluates each of his/her members for contribution and cooperation in the group and each member evaluates the chairperson for leadership and ability to regulate activities to achieve objectives.

The individual evaluations of the panel presentations is based on the degree to which the student meets the objectives laid down in this project manual for the oral presentations. Of course, creativity and imagination in regards to presentation methodology is greatly considered by the instructor.

The group panel presentation evaluation is divided into the following parts, with evaluation based on indicators below:

Organization: To what degree does the group fit together or is the group cohesive? Have they utilized the small group meetings to make the procedure smooth and organized? Is planning readily apparent?

Introduction to Problem/

Problem Definition: How refined is the definition of the problem? How well is the problem and the particular brand of group attack upon the problem described? To what degree does the group obtain the interest of the class from the onset by drawing relevance to the class?

Reasons/Causes: How well does the group portray the reasons for the existence of the problem? To what degree are the profound conditions indirectly creating and fostering the problem discussed? Are all of the group noted causes logically substantiated by evidence presented by the group?

Possible Solutions: To what extent does the group entertain every conceivable solution or idea which might either stop or slow down the perpetuation of a problem? Does the group present solutions which take into consideration the ramifications of those solutions? Does the group explore the economic, political, social, religious, cultural, and historical implications of the problem?

Opinions/Conclusions: How well do the combined members inject their personal attitudes, values, and problem-solving abilities (thought-oriented) into their statements? Does the group go beyond author-source material and superficial criticism of that kind of material into intelligent and reasonable views based on their own personally developed and well thought out suggestions.

Question & Answer Discussion: To what degree of excellence does the group field the questions from the class? Are answers superficial or thought provoking and genuine? Does the group have any questions for the class if the class has few for them? Does the group lead the Q & A authoritatively?

Students questions (from the class) are evaluated solely as extra credit based on relevancy to the subject.

The other extra credit projects (art, photo, literature, etc.) are also another source of evaluation for the instructor. (These projects are usually displayed or distributed during, before, or after the panel presentation on that particular panel day.)

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Absence Evaluation:

One final note on absences and incompletes in relation to evaluation: If a student is absent on the day of his/her oral panel presentation, that student will receive zero credit for the individual panel grade; but will receive the group panel grade as if he/she were present. As concerns the written material-it must be present for credit; if not, that will require additional zeros.

This policy may seem harsh; however, due to temporal limitations there is no other time at which the instructor may observe the oral presentation except during the prescribed, assigned class period. This is the only method by which to guarantee maximum equality and fairness to all students in the group, and in the class.

It is the view of the instructor that while evaluation and methodology to accomplish that end are difficult, to say the least, in their achievement of equality; this multi-evaluative procedure lessens the inherent evils of evaluation considerably. Some students excel out of the classroom, some in; some in groups, some individually; some verbally, some through written mastery; some through excellent requirement completion, some through adequate requirement but integrated extra credit project work; and, it is with this in mind, that I feel this evaluation is reasonable, fair, and completely justified.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

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While primary research (newspaper, etc.) is important in the instruction of a course in Contemporary Political and Social Problems, there is never any complete rationale for restricting research specifically to it, or any other single mode thereof. And yet, the significance of the newspaper, and other primary sources cannot be set aside in such a course due to the mutual aim of being just what the name of the course implies: "contemporary." The integration of these two essential principles laid the basis for the organization of this Problem Panel Project; for the PPP meets the expectations of both.

The advantages of the learning environments created in this project are expressed throughout the objective statements and the procedural points; but there are advantages from the point of instruction also. This independent research and group work does not give the instructor free time; but, more importantly, valuable time; time to add one more resource to the students' list of growing curiosity: the instructor him/herself. Since the instructor is not concentrating on teacher-to-student(mass) activity, the opportunity arises for the instructor to dive into the students' pool of research, swim around a bit entertaining various alternatives for the student to follow, and perhaps climb back out of the pool feeling a bit more like a useful pragmatist, and maybe even feeling, and being looked upon, as somebody who really cares. After all, isn't this what it's all about?